Report on Peace – by J. H. Sherwood.

On the subject of Peace, your Committee would report – That so far as they have been able to learn, the cause has been gaining considerable ground, during the past year, in a part of our own country & in Great Britain. Tracts papers & books have been written and widely circulated, and the utmost energies of its friends have been enlisted in a peaceable way in propogating it principles. In our own country this has been confined almost entirely to New England, whilst across the Atlantic the Quakers have been most zealous in the cause.

We have examined the various documents that could be obtained on this subject, from which we have endeavoured to glean some of the principles & professions of its supporters. But we must acknowledge that there appears to be a diversity of opinion not small among them – in fact, that there are no definite & settled principles by which the cause is plead & supported. Whilst some justify defensive war, as well as individual self defence – deprecating only the evils of aggressive war & its necessary attendants – standing armies & navies; others have not stopped short of a total denial of the right of self defence, either of an individual over his life when threatened by an assasin, or of a nation when trampled upon by arbitrary power, if that

defense involves the necessity of taking life.
And we think the majority of its friends are of the
latter class, among whom as its champion was the
late Mr. Grimke of South Carolina — and among the
quakers of England Jonathan Dymond. Both these
distinguished men were strenuous opposers of the
right to take life — even that of an assassin, or
malefactor.

But the benevolent founders of the Peace Soc.
seem never to have anticipated the grand
march of invasion that the Peace forces would
make in the unfriendly territories — they calculated
only on changing public sentiment so far as to
condemn the practice of making war for
pride, or glory, or revenge, — to influence the
nations & powers of the earth to establish a certain
code of international law, by which their
differences might be settled without an appeal
to arms — they did not deny the right of an injured
and oppressed nation to throw off the yoke of
despotism, — but if their soil, their homes & firesides
were invaded by a mercenary foe, to repel that
invasion at the expense of the life's blood of the
enemy. They did not deny the just & righteous
principles that actuated our forefathers to take
up arms — nay many of them themselves stood
the brunt of the battle, & gloriously & with firm

faith in God, maintained the vantage ground against the hirelings of Europe. But it remained for their noble sons, who inherited the invaluable blessing of liberty which they purchased, to stand up before the world & boldly condemn their conduct & principles — to proclaim in the face of so bright (and to every American patriots heart) so holy an example of defensive war, that it was waged against principle & duty, & that their hands were guilty of blood unjustly shed. A fact will suffice. Mr. Grimke, whose name has been mentioned as a most able & zealous advocate of Peace, in an address before the Connecticut Peace Soc. declared in these words.

"I shrink not from the accountability of condemning unreservedly & unconditionally, the means employed to accomplish the revolution".

What! Lend among us the insolent tax-gatherer and the more insolent Soldier, Command the delegate of their power to harrass & oppress, Cast the Father in prison, Confiscate his property, Banish the wife of his bosom, & banish the daughter of his love — and We, their pledged & sworn protectors — their defenders by nature & every tie of humanity, shall we not have the right, yea even from the word of God & our own Consciences, to stand up in their defence!!!

There seems to be a strong analogy between the right of a community to defend itself against the secret assassin, and that of a nation to stand in its defense. — If I am assailed in my person or property it is true I do not take the power in my own hands to obtain reparation for the offense, because there is a power in the community to which I also am subject whose duty it is to protect the rights of its members, — and in the exercise of that just ~~right or~~ prerogative, they may cause the death of the offender. But is not the government of a nation by a just analogy, bound to defend its members, to protect their right & secure their happiness. Yet if they can only take cognisance of offenses committed within their jurisdiction & by their own members or citizens, without the authority to affect those without, then surely will they become a prey the depraved of other nations — who will always leagued together for the oppression of the defenseless and the commission of crimes. We will see how a peace Magistrate would act on this point. (See Colquhoun page 176)

Again — In the dead hour of night I am invaded in my dwelling by a villain, whose design is to plunder, and who is known, in the commission of his crimes, to take life

having it as his motto that "dead men tell no tales." — now it seems to be established by a principle of self preservation & ratified by the wisest legislators & expounders of jurisprudence that I have an undeniable right, may as a good citizen ought to take his life, since by the commission of his crime he has forfeited it to his country & to his maker. But if one villain will attack me & I may repel the attack, should a thousand murderers invade the community may not a thousand citizens repel the invasion with weapons of death. But in a nation invaded, the rights of many citizens are infringed, and surely therefore all have an authority to arm themselves in the defence of their common rights. And a nation may not only be injured on its own soil — but there may be foreign aggressions that will demand an appeal to arms. A nation may become piratical As did Algiers — and in the security of her fastnesses, and the keels of her swift vessels may continue to plunder & murder on the high seas — Her bands may land on some unprotected coast, carrying destruction in their course, & and lay for & seizing ~~carrying~~ ~~Captives away~~ many female whose age & person would render her a fit subject for the Dey's Harem — and many athletic youths to drag out a

miserable existence. And what nation is there whose sisters & brothers were thus ruthlessly torn away from them, ought not to commence an immediate, aggressive & exterminating war.

The truth is, that along as human nature is as it is, so long as the base passions predominate over reason & the kindly sympathies of the heart, so long will Crimes be committed, & stern justice will have to take its course. It is in vain for us to invent fanciful theories for the government of the world that can only be useful when the causes that produced them shall have ceased to exist. When the Millennium day shall arrive no doubt the sword will be beaten into the ploughshare, but until then, in the language of Scripture, "the ruler beareth not the sword in vain," Nations must have the physical power to keep down the rising passions of men.

The grand scheme of the Am. Peace Soc. at present is to have a Congress of Nations, by which certain international rules & regulations may be established, amongst which is to be a court of equity, to try & settle peaceably national grievances & disputes. Prize Essays have been written during the past year & are now in the hands of a Committee of examination, on the subject of a Congress, and it is supposed that the principles of Peace are so rapidly disseminating - that ere long this

may be effected. But this plan was started so early as 1740. by a Frenchman, De St. Pierre. St. Pierre presented his scheme to Cardinal Fleury prime minister to Lewis 15. The Cardinal, himself tho a great lover of peace, was fully sensible that such a scheme could not be successful, replied to him that he had forgotten one grand preliminary article in his plan - which was, the delegation of a body of missionaries to dispose the ~~rulers of the earth~~ hearts of the Princes of europe to such a congress.

But suppose such a plan should come into operation, and a Congress of Nations should meet on some small Island where they could not be overawed by any government; yet would not the stronger nations, as at present, desire to controul the lesser powers, and in this very Congress a "Holy alliance" be established that would be just as dangerous, and as certain a cause of war. Yes so long as the rulers of the earth are actuated by love of glory, or lust of gain, such a scheme could not be successful, and when their hearts become changed a Congress would be unnecessary.

But whilst we think that all the plans of the Peace Soc. are not feasible, yet we do approve, as we trust every Christian does, of those

of the features of that institution. We think that as a Bible message peace ought to be proclaimed, and is proclaimed by every minister of the gospel, — and certainly there can be no ~~better~~ other, or ~~other~~ better way to introduce universal peace, than by by preaching the truths of that gospel... for it alone can calm the jarring passions of men.

It is therefore the duty not only of Peace men so called, but of every Christian to proclaim the glad news of "Peace on earth" — it was sung by angels, and speaks from Calvary in the mild accents of a Saviour's love. Let every minister of the gospel teach it — let every missionary teach it, as he wends his weary way among the fallen ruins of despotism & the dark realms of superstition & ignorance. Peace will bless the nations, for the gospel can produce it; but by no other means than the dissemination of gospel truths, brought home by the Spirit to the hearts of men, can it ever be effected. In vain may the philanthopist travel from Country to Country — proclaiming the evils of War — so long as the hearts of men are "fully set in them to do evil". We may make calculations of the oceans of blood & the millions of lives offered upon this Shrine of Moloch, of the money wasted & the incalculable misery it has brought upon the human family. Yet

their hearts will be unaffected, and they will turn from the argument, to delight in the rolling drum, the neighing steed, & all the "pomp & circumstance of war".

But give them correct religious principles lead them to the cross, & cause their proud hearts to break at the exhibition of a saviours love, and they will learn wars no more — but the calm reign of Peace will commence, and the prophecy will be fulfilled — "that violence shall no more be heard in thy ~~Streets~~ land, wasting nor destruction within thy boards but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation & thy gates Praise".

All which is respectfully submitted

J. H. Shannon

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